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THE

HOLY COMMUNION BOOK:

A Book of Instruction and Devotion,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF

COMMUNICANTS AT THE TABLE OF OUR LORD.

BY THE PRELATE DR. KAPFF,

Court-Preacher and Supreme Counsellor of the Consistory of Stuttgart.

Kapff, Sixt Karl

AN EXTRACT FROM THE AUTHOR'S LARGER COMMUNION BOOK

Translated from the German by the Rev. A. L. YOUNT, A. M.,
Pastor of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church,
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I have no apology to make for offering this little work of Dr. Kapff to the public in an English dress. I believe it to be needed, and consider it well adapted to fulfil the demand for a work of this kind. Its value, and the appreciation of that value in Germany, are manifest from the fact that already in 1878, the 23rd edition was issued in Stuttgart. Germany has many books of this character, written by many of her ablest scholars and most devout ministers, and it is somewhat of a recommendation, if, in the midst of the great multitude of similar books which claim patronage, a book, in a few years' time, pass through twenty-three editions. Our American Lutheran Church has few books which give anything worthy of note, especially of a devotional character, pertaining to the Lord's Supper; and none, so far as known to us, which are, like this, devoted exclusively to this subject. The Lord's Supper is one of the principal strongholds of our Evangelical Lutheran faith. We hold the true biblical doctrine concerning it. It is one of the most precious means of grace. Here at the Lord's Table, we are admitted into such a real communion with our Lord as we find nowhere else. Lutherans should therefore be well informed as to the nature and benefits of the holy sacrament, as well as also what constitutes a worthy preparation to receive it. Suitable forms of prayer and devotion for general use seem also to be highly necessary. The translator has for some years felt the need of such a work as is suggested by these needs, convenient in form, compact, so as to render it cheap enough for general circulation, and at the same time

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sufficiently exhaustive to cover the whole ground. Such a work he has never found among Lutheran publications in the English language. Among the many in the German language, this one was thought to be best adapted to our wants in this country. Hence its selection.

He is conscious that scores of men in our church in this country could have performed the task of giving out this book in English much better than he has done, but they have not done it. He therefore submits the result of his labors to the church.

Praying that this little manual of instruction and devotion may lead many worthily to the altar of our Lord, that they may there eat and drink the true body and blood of the Lord to their souls' good, and thus glorify the name of our blessed Jesus, this little volume is now sent forth.

Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, January, 1882.

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THE HOLY COMMUNION BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

INVITATION.

I. WORDS OF THE LORD ADDRESSED TO OUR HEARTS.

(1). *To all who seek and love Him.*

"BEHOLD, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: Come to the marriage feast." Thus the King of heaven and earth invites you. (Matt. xxii., 4; Luke xiv., 17). In His only Son He has wedded Himself to our frail humanity, and whoever has become one with Jesus through faith is so dear to the Father in heaven that this great and precious word, "I will betroth thee unto me forever," applies unmistakably to him. (Hosea ii., 19; Isa. lxii., 5; lvii., 15). For this reason He calls, "Come to the marriage feast." Where is there a marriage, a betrothal, a uniting of the Lord with us more intimate than here in the Holy Supper, where we receive Himself veritably into us, in accordance with the highest invitation which can be given: "*Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Drink ye all of it; this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.*" This is the feast which the King of kings and Lord of lords has prepared. It is an *honor* to be invited to the table of an earthly king, and it is SALVATION and GLORY to be invited by Him to whom

even the angels are subject, to whom all power is given in heaven and upon earth. And what are all the costliest feasts of earth compared with what He gives? Who can comprehend the powers of eternity which are imparted to us in the body and blood of the Son of God, who is exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high? (John vi., 35, 51, 54). And here none are to count themselves too poor and too unworthy to come and receive it. Whoever seeks relief from the wretchedness of his sins, and has a longing after Jesus, is welcome to this feast. (John vi., 37; Matt. xi., 28-30; 2 Cor. xii., 9; Matt. v., 3-6; Isa. lv., 1-3; Jer. xxxi., 25).

(2). *To those especially who are troubled on account of their sins, the Lord addresses very friendly words of invitation.*

In Isa. i., 18, He says: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Ezek. xvi., 5, 6: "None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee. . . . And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood (helpless in the destruction of sin), I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him," (Ps. ciii., 13); and as a mother He will comfort them, (Isa. lxvi., 13); yea, more than a mother will He do for us, (Isa. xlix., 14-16.) Read also Jer. xxxi., 20; Isa. liv., 7, 8, 10; liii., 11, 12; lx., 2; xli., 10; xliii., 18; xliv., 22; lxi., 1-3; Jer. xxix., 11; Zech. ix., 11; Mark ii., 17; Luke xii., 32; Micah vii., 19; Ezek. xxxiii., 14-16; xvi., 62, 63; xxxii., 16.

(3). *To those who yet lack proper repentance.*

He exhorts: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place."—(Jer. vii., 3). "Wash ye, make you clean (in Jesus' blood); put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. . . . Then come to me, and your sins shall be white as snow."—(Isa. xi., 16-18). "Except a man be born anew, he can not see the Kingdom of God." —(John iii., 3). See also Matt. v., 3, 4, 20; vii., 13, 19, 21; Isa. lix., 2; Jer. ix., 13, 15; iii., 12-14; 2 Cor. vi., 16-18.

II. EXAMPLES OF INVITATION.

(1). Jesus administered His Holy Supper to the disciples, although they had as yet given no evidence of great wisdom or righteousness. He also washed their feet, because He loved them to the end.

(2). He ate with the common people, (John ii., 1-11), with publicans and sinners, (Matt. ix., 10-11; Luke xv., 1), with Zaccheus (Luke xix., 5), with Samaritans, (John iv., 40), and even with Pharisees, (Luke vii., 36; xiv., 1). And in the parable of the Great Supper, He calls the outcast and forsaken from the highways and hedges,—the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, to His supper. All they had to do was to put on the wedding garment.—(Luke xiv., 16; Matt. xxii., 1-13). Since He condescended to such persons, will he now despise you, if you with spiritual hunger and thirst appear at His table? No; be of good cheer, hungering soul.

(3). He shows great mercy towards sinners in general; *e. g.*, towards the palsied man, (Matt. ix., 2), the woman in Simon's house, (Luke vii., 48-50), the

adulteress, (John viii., 11), toward Peter after he had denied Him, toward the thief on the cross, (Luke xxiii., 43), toward Saul who persecuted Him in the persons of His believing ones, (1 Tim. i., 16), toward the great debtor, (Matt. xviii., 27), and toward all men, (1 Tim. ii., 6; 1 John ii., 2). This should inspire joyful courage and childlike faith.

CHAPTER II.

INSTRUCTION.

I. THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SUPPER.

LUTHER teaches: "The Supper of Christ is a sacrament and divine watchword, in which Christ is truly and really present, and gives His body and His blood along with the bread and wine; whereby He grants, signifies and assures to us the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life."

Christ gives us in the Holy Supper, in, with, and under bread and wine, His body and His blood. Even the Reformer Calvin remarks: "Bread and wine are, through the word of the Lord, the mysterious means through which the body and blood of Christ are conveyed to us. When we receive the sign of the body, the body itself is received, because the reality (the thing itself) is inseparable from the sign. Along with the holy symbols (signs, pledges, namely, bread and wine) are given us to eat and to drink the true body and blood of Christ."

Reason can not grasp this mystery; neither can it comprehend how in Christ divinity and humanity are

united in one indivisible person. As there is in Him a union of the divine Spirit with an earthly body and soul, so in the Holy Supper His glorified body and blood are united with earthly bread and wine. We have no conception of the glory of a glorified body; but as the sun sends out his beams and influence in every direction, so—and much more—does the glorified body of Jesus, which is as much more glorious than the sun as the Creator is more glorious than the thing created, and the spiritual body than the earthly body. As wine is really water united with spirit, so the wine in the Holy Supper, by the power of the divine word, is united with a higher spiritual existence, namely, with the glorified body of Jesus; and the Lord does in the Holy Supper much like He did with the water at the marriage in Cana, except that in the Holy Supper it is not apparent to the senses, but is a spiritual work. He unites *spirit* with *water*.

We see, then, that in the Lord's Supper there are two-fold gifts; (1) earthly and visible—bread and wine; (2) heavenly and invisible—the body and blood of Christ. These are, through the word of the Lord and the inseparable spiritual working which accompanies it, united together, just as in the person of Christ the human and divine natures, the earthly and the heavenly, became one. On account of this union *(communio)* the Lord's Supper is called a *sacrament*, *i. e.*, a holy transaction in which the invisible grace of God is united with visible vehicles, by the power of the divine word. That word is, partly the divine command, "Take," and partly the divine promise, "for the remission of sins."

The Holy Supper is therefore an eating and drinking, in which we not merely in *imagination* but in *reality*, receive Christ into ourselves, together with the

full power of His atonement, and the everlasting blessing of His glorification of the human in the divine, the earthly in the heavenly. As the bread which we eat and the wine which we drink are changed into chyle within us, and this is distributed throughout our flesh and blood, so that every part and member of our body within and without is nourished and kept in a healthy condition, so Christ's body and blood enters into our inmost being, and penetrates with its atoning and sanctifying power, as a heavenly nourishment, our whole man, so that spirit, soul and body are throughout sanctified as temples of God, and are glorified in the divine nature, which glorification is yet hid with Christ in God, but shall at the resurrection appear manifest in glory. Only those who impenitently and inconsiderately use this Supper receive no benefit, but much rather judgment; in the same manner as the pillar of fire was a clear shining light to the children of Israel, but a thick darkness to the Egyptians, and as Christ is a savour of life unto life to some, but a savour of death unto death to others.

For believers, there is found in this wonderful Supper the appropriation of all that our most holy faith includes. All that the entire New Testament teaches us concerning the divine truths and promises is concentrated and given to us in the body and blood of Christ our Lord, whereby *Christ for us* becomes *Christ in us.* This Holy Supper is not merely a memorial feast, but a feast of atonement and reconciliation with God and man, a feast of sanctification, and of the resurrection of spirit, soul and body. As such, let us now further consider it.

II. THE POWER AND BLESSING OF THE HOLY SUPPER.

(1). *The Lord's Supper as a Memorial Feast.*

We know it as such from the words of our Lord: "This do in remembrance of Me." (Luke xxii, 19; 1 Cor., xi, 24-25). As the passover was kept in remembrance of the great deliverance from Egyptian bondage, (Ex. xii, 27), so this feast of the Lord's Supper shall keep alive the remembrance of Jesus, and distinguish His natural from His redeeming work. The consecrated bread sets forth His body which was broken and offered on the cross for the redemption of men; the consecrated wine sets forth the blood of Jesus which was shed for the remission of our sins. Thus the precious Friend of our souls is brought, as it were, before our eyes, and we are in spirit placed in that holy assembly in which Jesus on the last night of His life, like a father about to depart from his children, took His leave, gave His last blessing, and instituted His testament, containing the costliest bequest,—far more valuable than any father can leave behind him. Here we hear words of the most intimate and tenderest affection spoken into the saddened hearts of His disciples. (John xiii-xvii). Then we see him trembling and sorrowing on our account, see Him sweating drops of blood under the fearful burden of justice which He suffered in our stead, see Him seized, bound, smitten, scourged, and spitted on, and bleeding under the crown of thorns, see Him condemned to death, and nailed to the cross; behold him forsaken of God in the dark night of death, and fainting on account of thirst under the anguish of the cross on which His body died and His blood was shed, until He had finished all, and committed His spirit into His Father's hands.

All this is brought before our souls in the use of the Holy Supper; for He says: "The bread which I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." (John vi. 51.) In like manner the apostle instructs us: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." 1 Cor. xi. 26. Through all ages of the church, until the glorious second coming of Christ, shall the remembrance of Jesus' death on the cross be kept alive by means of the Holy Supper of our Lord. It is the chain which binds together the two great periods of the world, between which we live, namely, (1) Jesus' first advent into the world, His presence in it, His vicarious death, and (2) His future coming in glory. It is the complement of the former, and a preparation for the latter. Here we are not only made to think upon His death, but we have a real memorial of it, i. e., we are made internally sensible of its reality. For this reason Jesus speaks not only of bread and wine, but says that we shall eat His body and drink His blood, and this unlocked for the remission of our sins.

Let us then treat next of

(1.) *The Lord's Supper as a Feast of Reconciliation.*

Jesus says: "This is my body which is given for you." (Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24); "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 28.) And in John vi. 51, He says: "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever; yea the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." If we eat and drink that which is given for the remission of our sins, we receive along with this the remission itself in the same manner as with bread we receive the nourishment in the bread and with the wine also the

spirit of wine. The two cannot be separated. In the means of atonement, atonement is afforded. On this Luther remarks: "Whoever believes the words, 'given and shed for you,' has what is here declared and set forth, namely, the remission of sins." And Calvin also says: "It should benefit us nothing that Christ's body was once slain as an offering for us, if we did not now still eat this holy feast."

It is true that apart from the Holy Supper we have daily reconciliation with God through faith, but at the table of the Lord it is more strongly assured, as it were, by a letter, seal and pledge, so that the communicant who is grieved on account of his sins may reflect thus: "As certainly as I eat Jesus' body and drink His blood, so certainly do I receive the forgiveness of all my sins." But, in order to be partakers in such reconciliation with God, this feast of the death of Jesus must also be a feast of our reconciliation with all men. For if we do not forgive, we shall not be forgiven. (Matt. vi., 15; v., 23). Peace with God is impossible, so long as we are at enmity with men. But if we stand in the proper peaceful and affectionate relation among all men, we shall realize

(3). *The Lord's Supper as a feast of Union.*

Jesus says: "Whoso eateth of me, because I live he shall live also. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him." (John vi., 51-58). This abiding of Christ in us signifies the real union between us and Him, in which he gives Himself to those to whom He, according to John xiv., 23, comes with the Father to make His abode with them. The Holy Ghost establishes this indwelling between the Father of spirits and the children that are born to Him, between Christ and

those who through faith and love join themselves to Him. As the vine and the branches are one, so Christ and His members are one, (John xv., 5) ; yea, the members of His body are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. (Eph. v., 30). Eye hath not seen it, nor ear heard it, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, except those to whom God has manifested it through His Spirit.

But whoever is thus united with God and Christ, to him this love-feast of Jesus is also a feast of union among men, especially among believers. It is one bread ; so we, being many, are one body, inasmuch as we are all partakers of this one bread. (1 Cor. x., 17). At the table of Jesus we are as a holy family, as children of one Father in heaven, as brethren and sisters of one Lord, who is not ashamed to call us brethren, and who has said concerning the whole human race : "I will draw all men unto me." (John xii., 32). Therefore we must pray for those who are not yet so drawn and secured, as well as for those who belong to Him and love Him with renewed hearts.

(4). *The Lord's Supper as a feast of Sanctification.*

It demands and promotes sanctification. The demand is found in 1 Cor xi., 27-31 : "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, and is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." He is unworthy who comes without repentance, faith and love, who loves the world more than Christ, and will not depart from this love, or who is indifferent in regard to the truths concerning the sacrifice of Jesus, and does not desire the forgiveness of his sins. For this reason the apostle so earnestly enjoins self-examination ; for out of this alone comes the knowledge of self, and from this alone comes repentance, which with shame and

sorrow laments past sins. and causes us with perfect humility to plead for the forgiveness of sins. But how shall a man examine himself? He must look earnestly into his own heart and conscience, search his whole life according to the entire *rule of life*, and search his heart to its secret depths. and if by this means there is awakened deep contrition and longing for salvation, and if it be his ardent desire to be released from his sins, and to seek for holiness, then let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup.

Then in order to the enjoyment of this Holy Supper, there must precede it, by means of repentance, an earnest consecration to it. As the priests before they entered into the sanctuary prepared themselves by washing and bathing, so must the communicant prepare himself by repentance. But it must be remembered that the Holy Supper is a promoter and effectual means of producing holiness, and carries with it special sanctifying influences. It is for this reason that Jesus says, that by the eating of His body and the drinking of His blood we receive true life. (John vi., 51-53). This life is spiritual, the life of love, which is the root of sanctification, and which results from the inner union with Jesus. If He remain in us and we in Him, His life must be exemplified in us, and our life must be glorified by His image. Love accomplishes what the beloved desires. If we have put Him on, His holy life is the impulse and moving power of our life. As we in Baptism are buried with Him into death, so are we in the Holy Supper, the feast of Jesus' death, planted with Him together in a like death and a like resurrection. (Rom. vi., 3-6; xi., 13, 32). From such a spiritual resurrection follows the bodily resurrection, as the plant comes out of the seed.

We shall then next consider

(5). *The Lord's Supper as a Resurrection feast.*

Jesus says: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." John vi, 54, 55. For this reason the early church fathers called the Lord's Supper *the medicine of immortality.* Luther says: "If a man eat of Him spiritually through the word, He abides in him spiritually; if a man eat of Him bodily (as in the Lord's Supper), He abides in him bodily, and transforms the soul into rightousness and the body into immortality." Calvin also declares: "Through His life-giving flesh we are nourished unto immortality." In the Holy Supper we receive the glorified body of Jesus which was offered on the cross, which was beforehand inwardly, and after the resurrection, also outwardly glorified, this lower earthly being clothed upon, and thoroughly interwoven with spiritual powers, and lighted up with the light of the spirit, and at the ascension was fully received into the glory of the divine nature, so that it is no more as an earthly body circumscribed by space, but is, joined with the eternal Spirit of Jesus, like the sun which sends out his rays and imparts his influence in all directions and places. This glorified spiritual body of Jesus sanctifies our bodily condition, and permeates it with the powers of His recuperating life. Thus already in us the sleeping germ of the resurrection body is nourished by the body and blood of Christ, so that in us, beneath this moral veil, is concealed the incorruptible spiritual body as a temple of the Holy Ghost, which can *never see death.* John xi, 26; viii, 51; Rom. viii, 10, 11; 1 Cor, xv, 53, 49; John vi, 50, 51. Thus then we see that the Lord's Supper is a foretaste of that heavenly supper of

which the Lord speaks in Matt. xxvi, 29; Luke xxii, 30; Luke xiii, 29; Rev. ii, 17, 2; vii, 17; xix. 9. "Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

III. THE RIGHT USE OF THE HOLY SUPPER.

(1). *Rules to govern the motives of communicants.*

1. Come not merely because it is a *custom*. Many have a practice of going several times a year to the Holy Communion, and when the stated days approach they prepare for it. This custom is right and good, but it is a great fault when it is followed merely as an externally imposed custom, without repentance and spiritual desire, without meditating much upon one's self, and upon the exalted aim and blessings of this holiest transaction. God will be worshipped only by those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. John iv, 24.

2. Come not on account of *others*, merely that they may consider you pious, or so that you may escape any charge of evil in which you are actually entangled, or that those whom you have offended may the sooner forgive you. Think of the fearful curse which shall fall upon the hypocrite, and remember that in this holy act you are not dealing with men, but actually with the holy and just God, who tries the heart and reins, who sees all impurity, and at the judgment will bring to light all the hidden things of darkness. 2 Cor., iv, 5.

3. Come not with *work-righteousness* in your heart. Many think that by receiving the Holy Supper they do God a service, and thus earn merit for themselves. Has the beggar who pleads for charity any merit? Has the sick man who takes medicine any merit?

Think of that word of the Lord, Matt. vii, 21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." This will is repentance, faith and consecration. External religious acts are merely means to this end, as eating is to labor. As little as eating gives merit, so little does the use of the Holy Supper.

4. Come not simply *to put your conscience to sleep.* Many use the Holy Supper because they suppose that thereby absolution or remission of sins is imparted, and thus the burdens of conscience are removed, and they can again proceed in the service of sin with an easy mind. Such profaning of this holy Sacrament is an abomination unto the Lord, and deserves the judgment of God as recited by Isaiah, chap. i, 10 seq.: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord; I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. . . . Bring no more vain obligations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting (the custom of keeping feasts thinking to appease me thereby). Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. . . . . Come now,

let us reason together." Hosea vi, 6. "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

5. Come with *a humble sense of your need*, and a hearty desire for the rich grace of the Lord. Come to receive the forgiveness of sins, and at the same time for strength to fight against the inclinations and desires to sin. Come for the strengthening of your faith and hope, and also to receive new strength for love and devotion. Come to be joined to Jesus and to be quickened in spirit, soul and body; in short, *come to be made a new creature.*

(2). *Rules for the preparation to receive the Holy Supper.*

1. Do not *think too lightly* of it. Let your self-examination and repentance be candid and earnest. Place your whole life and all your circumstances before the mirror of the divine word, and let all that the Lord has written against you be uncovered by His Spirit. 1 Cor. iv., 4. Consider every one of God's commandments, and you must confess that you have not perfectly kept any one of them. And remember, too, that if any one keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point, he is guilty of all. James ii., 10. [See Chapter III. of this book].

2. Do not *think too heavily* of it. The Holy Supper is a *joy-inspiring* mystery, not a *dreadful* one, before which men must tremble. It is not a feast of *judgment*, but a feast of *love* and *joy*. Fear not, only believe. One penitent look into the heart, and a believing glance at Jesus' cross—this is the easy access to the table of the Lord. Meditate prayerfully and diligently upon His sufferings and death, and take to yourself all that He has done for you in Gethsemane

and Golgotha, and you can with joyful faith eat of His body and drink of His blood. As a help to such meditation upon the death of Jesus, an attentive reading and consideration of the Passion History will be advantageous, as will also the last discourses of Jesus recorded by St. John, chapters xiii. to xvii. Whoever earnestly meditates upon these precious passages of God's word, and with profound self-examination and repentance lays these truths to his heart and life, needs no *Communion Book* such as this.

3. Do not let your preparation for the Holy Supper consist merely in external reading, and praying out of human devotional books. Let not others speak for you, but perform for yourself what is necessary by entering into the sacred presence of God. Shun mere mechanical devotion, and mere repetition of prayer, lip-service, and formality. Seek to enter into a truly believing intercourse with your God and Saviour, and let a confession of Him before men be made. Acknowledge your faults, and pray Him to grant you true repentance and faith. Let Him prepare you by His Spirit. Do not limit your preparation to certain special hours, or to one certain day. The wedding garment is not a cloak, which one may put on at any time, or only when about to celebrate the Holy Supper. It must cover us continually, and especially during the week previous to partaking of this Supper everything should contribute to the putting of it on anew with all its splendor. St. Paul says: "Pray without ceasing," (1 Thess. v., 17), *i. e.*, continue always in spiritual communion with God, even when the hands are not folded. Men ought so to live at all times that no long preparation should ever be necessary to insure a salutary approach to the table of the Lord. Whoever lives a true life of prayer can at any

moment go to the Lord's table. To such we may also give the rule :

4. Go to the Holy Communion *often*. The early Christians at first celebrated it every day, and afterwards every Lord's day. They had the true idea, namely, that we in the wilderness of this life have need to receive the heavenly manna often. And the more we are convinced of the unspeakable worth of this holy means of grace, the greater will be our hungering for the same. Some celebrate it every month, and this is not too much. Its virtue and significance can only be lost by the emptiness of human custom.

(3). *Rules for the celebration of the Holy Supper itself.*

1. Approach the table with *holy reverential fear and humility*, but at the same time with an exalted and well-grounded joy over the great honor and inestimable goodness which are yours here. Come with a heart to which God attributes nothing but good, and through its kindliness as by the gentle rays of the sun lets His goodness shine forth. Come with the mind of Paul, "Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to those things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii, 13. Forget what is behind, forget all that oppresses and burdens you, and when you fear that you are unworthy, think of those words of Paul: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus." Whatever you yet lack can be given you in the Holy Supper. If you already had all things, the Supper would no longer be necessary. The poorer you are, the more it can enrich you.

2. Do not fail in your worthiness and miss the blessings of the Supper on account of *feelings* before or after its use. Do not raise your expectations too high, and beware of reaching too high. Joyous feelings are more or less pleasing, but are not always genuine. The sun is still in heaven, although it be obscured by clouds. So Jesus and the riches of His promised blessings of grace are in the Supper, even though you may not at once realize them. We are not directed to depend upon *feelings* but upon *faith*. *It* is *faith* which saves us, not *feeling*. Many there are who shed tears on account of lively emotions and good feelings, and yet the main thing is wanting in them, namely, true repentance, and proper earnestness of faith and consecration. Mere feelings are like smoke which is soon gone, like clouds which give no rain, at least are not fruitful, a weakly, ineffective swarm. Blessed are they that have not seen or felt, but have believed. The blessing of the Holy Supper lies not in us, nor is the cause of it in us, but in the Lord and His promise.

3. When you come to the Holy Supper *look not upon him who gives it*, nor upon those who participate with you, but look upon your Saviour, and be as though you were there with Him alone. He grants you this Supper by the power of His word and promise. Men can neither make nor unmake the sacrament. *Jesus* gives it to you. To Him you must look, as if He really stood before you, and said: "Take eat, this is my body; take drink, this is my blood." Let no evil thoughts and feelings arise in you concerning others. Think of your own faults, not of those of others. Concern yourself about your own condition, not that of others. Pray for and love those who are at variance with you, and do not forget that the Holy Supper is a great feast of reconciliation.

4. In order that all hindering and diverting thoughts, phantasies and pictures may be kept far from your soul, *place before you, in a living form, the Saviour,* especially His torture and crucifixion. Though evil thoughts, like firey arrows of Satan, shoot through your mind, let not this make you fearful. They can effect nothing against you. The Holy Supper can at once help you against them.

5. Guard against *outside diversions,* the vanity of beautiful or new clothing, against all in yourself or others that can awaken the lust of the eye. Leave what is earthly behind, rise above nature, where God and humanity blend in one, where perfect fullness is; there, there is thy best and most needful portion, thy One and thy All, thy happiest blessedness.

(4). *Rules to guide you after Communion.*

1. Give hearty thanks and praise for the exalted good which your Lord has vouchsafed to grant you, the full blessing of which eternity only shall fully unfold. In this the *praise* and *thanksgiving Psalms* will furnish you with suitable words, *e. g.*, Ps. xxiii., xxxiii., lx., xcv., c., but especially ciii., cxiii., cxviii., cxlv., cxlviii., cl.

2. Seek to verify the proffered and received blessing and that exalted union in which the Lord has united Himself with you. Defile not your wedding garment with fresh sins, and in the strength imparted by this heavenly food, fight against Satan, the world and the flesh. Live in the love of Him who has so greatly loved you, and endeavor to please the Beloved, who is made one with you, in all things, and keep constantly before your eyes the invisible world, which in the Holy Supper is so invitingly opened before you. Seek that which is above, and not that which is beneath upon the earth.

3. If after the Communion the flesh again rises in you, and sins still adhere to you, causing you to be slothful and unclean, do not suppose on this account that you have unworthily partaken of the Holy Supper, and that it will benefit you nothing. As long as we are in the flesh, we must contend against flesh and blood, and against the works and spirits of darkness. (Eph. vi., 11.) To this end, after the Supper the word in 1 John ii., 1, will be found to be of advantage: "My little children, these things (including the Holy Supper) write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if (after Communion) any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the whole world." Jesus forgives not only once, but every day anew, if we each time come to Him with new repentance and faith, and earnestness and fervency of devotion. For this reason not only one celebration of the Lord's Supper is appointed, as we have one Baptism, but we are continually and often to show forth the death of the Lord till He come.

CHAPTER III.

I. THE PREPARATION FOR RECEIVING THE HOLY SUPPER.

What is self-examination?

When the apostle exhorts us to self-examination as a necessary preparation for coming to the Table of our Lord, (1 Cor. ii., 28), he commands us to look into our heart and conscience, and diligently examine into our faith, repentance and new obedience, that we really

learn to know our sins, and confess them before God, and, if need be, before men. We are to see whether we sincerely regret our sinfulness and are pained on account of it; whether we truly long for the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and whether we in faith appropriate to ourselves what Jesus has done and suffered for us. We must inquire of ourselves whether we submit to His word. and strive to become one with Him, by following after Him and modelling our lives according to His will.

In order to know our sins, we should study especially the *Commandments* of God. In this mirror we are to diligently scrutinize ourselves, in order that every spot upon our inner man may be discovered to us.

Self-examination according to the First Commandment.

Do you love the Lord as your God and Father, your truest Deliverer and Saviour, your best Comforter and Teacher? Do you love Him with all your heart and soul? Do all other objects, things and men stand far beneath Him in your estimation, and by no means above Him or equal to him? Are fleshly lusts, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life ruling in your heart? Are not mammon, the glory of the world, and its pleasures and lusts, your god? Do you contend against evil thoughts, and do you drive out from your heart images of sin and of the world? Do you give God all glory? Do you thank Him for His great grace? Do you confess His truth before men? Or do you allow yourself to be controlled by the fear and favor of men? Do you trust in God more than in men, money and goods? Do you receive what rightly belongs to you as coming from Him? And do you bear all trials with patience and child-like submission?

Self-examination according to the Second Commandment.

Is the great name of God and of Jesus holy and precious to you? Or do you frivolously profane it by exclamations, assertions, or by swearing? Do you faithfully perform all that you, either upon oath or otherwise, solemnly promise? Do you shun all lying and deceit? Do you hate and avoid the dark works of witchcraft and devilish superstitions? In all times of need, do you call upon God, and give glory to Him above all others, as the one true Helper? How are you in prayer? Do you engage in it with spirit and life, or is it mere dead formality? Do you pray devoutly, penitently, humbly, believingly, in the name of Jesus? Do you also honor the name of God and of Jesus by your life? Do you not give offence, so that on account of your unholiness the name of Jesus is blasphemed by the world? Is not your christianity merely nominal, and consisting mostly in talk? Do you let your light so shine that others are edified and won by your good works?

Self-examination according to the Third Commandment.

Do you so fear God that you use the Sabbath and other festival days for the good of your soul, for rest in God, and not for the purpose of profane idleness? Do you endeavor so to deport yourself in them that they may assist in strengthening you through prayer, worship of God, and the private meditation upon God's word? Or do you misuse such times of grace for the indulgence of wordly lusts, dissipation, and unnecessary work? In what manner do you use the word of God and the Sacraments? Do you regularly and attentively read the Bible? Are you thankful for your Baptism? Do you gladly and with proper preparation receive the Holy Communion?

Self-examination according to the Fourth Commandment.

Do you honor and love, not only in words but also by acts, your parents and those who occupy the relation to you of parents, and also elder brothers and sisters, teachers, and all who are set over you in the church, the world, and the home? Do you obey not only in that which is plain and easy, but also in that which is mysterious and rigid? Do you bear the yoke with resignation? Do you always perform the service, office, or work which you are obligated to do? And do you do it from the heart for the Lord's sake, and out of love to Him and to men?

Self examination according to the Fifth Commandment.

Has never a thought arisen in your mind which, perhaps, wished death to some one? Do you strive against all anger, hatred, revenge, emnity and discord? Do you readily forgive when injured? Do you bear in mind Jesus' command which requires you to forgive seventy times seven times? Are you at heart reconcilable and peaceable? Can you love your enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you? And how is it with your love? Do you love your neighbor as yourself? Do you do to your neighbor as you would that he should do to you? Are you able to love all men as your neighbors, especially those who need your help? Do you care and pray for their spiritual and temporal welfare, relieve them in distress by offering consolation, counsel and needed help; and thus by works of mercy show your gratitude to your Saviour? Do you also perform for your own welfare what you ought? Do you care for your immortal soul, and for the health of your body so that you do not injure it by overexertion, by stingy abstinence, or by

excess in eating and drinking? Do you look upon life as a blessing and not a burden, and endeavor to work out of this death of nature a full and everlasting life in God?

Self-examination according to the Sixth Commandment.

1. Married Persons.—Have you kept faithfully to the soul with which you are joined, and loved it as your own flesh? Have you borne with his or her faults in love and gentleness? Or have you desired to be put asunder? Have you looked upon another as you ought not, or perhaps even entered into too great intimacy with him or her? Do you lead a pure and chaste wedlock, not indulging in lust, so that you can, without shame, have Jesus look upon you at all times?

2. The Unmarried.—Do you preserve your body pure and chaste as a vessel of grace, as a temple of the spirit? The Scripture saith: "He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," and has no inheritance in the Kingdom of God. (1 Cor., vi, 18; Eph. v, 5). Have you never fallen into this great sin and shame? Do you shun secret sins? Have you not nursed unclean lusts and desires within you, and have you kept away from you evil thoughts and pictures? Do you shun all that might lead you into unchastity, such as bad companions, books, pictures, and clothing, foolish talking and immodesty? Do you conduct yourself in the fear of God, and endeavor by a good example to effect your neighbor's advantage?

Self examination according to the Seventh Commandment.

Have you never taken to yourself the goods of another without his knowledge or consent, either openly or secretly, by cunning, fraud or breach of trust? Are

you honest even in the smallest matters? Do you make use of false measure, weight or merchandise? Do you practice any fraudulent advantage or trade, any trick, false reckoning or other things which have to avoid the light? Do you knowingly keep about you ill-gotten goods? Do you acquire anything of the kind for yourself? Do you waste, destroy, or defraud through neglect, laziness and indiscretion? And if you have unjust goods. do you seek to restore them? Being outwardly just, are you also free from envy and covetousness? Do you neither take too much or give too little? Do you make to yourself friends of the unrighteous mammon? Do you avoid overanxious care, and are you contented with what you have? Do you beware of the subtle arts of theft which are carried on through abuse of the gifts of God, by means of idleness, and unnecessary dissipation? Do you employ the talents both of body and soul which are intrusted to you so as to work God's glory, the benefit of your neighbor, and your own blessing?

Self-examination according to the Eighth Commandment.

Have you never, either before the legal authority or in common life, given false witness concerning anything? Are you always a witness of the truth, and do you seek thereby to establish truth and justice, that you may be at peace with God and Man? Or does your conscience rebuke you for lying and unfaithfulness? Does your mouth often speak otherwise than your heart thinks? Do you make nothing of lying, deceit, flattery, slander, speaking unkindly, or making and spreading gossip? Do you excuse the faults of others, and are you rather disposed to think well than evil of them? Do you never say about others in their absence what you would not say to them in their presence?

Self-examination according to the Ninth and Fifth Commandments.

Do you avoid all unjust endeavours to obtain what belongs to others, and to bring to your own possession under the appearance of right, by unjust and dishonest ways? Have you been pleasing in flatteries and arts? Do you do all you can to avoid them? Would you rather give an advantage that another gains? Would you rather suffer injustice than do injustice?

Do you grieve at the evil luck which you see to befall to your neighbor (not, and do you endeavour to prevent the ill, which is partly according to the decrees of luck and neither allow to assist yourself in the spirit of your mind, but to rejoice in the good luck, which other luck is caused by righteousness of mind?

When you examine yourself in the manner, you just, repent, in hard humble you have sinned against God, and have grieved and offended Him, who is your heavenly Creator, Redeemer and Comforter, so humbled and offer to willingly and submissively? Do you look with inward sorrow particularly upon your heavy, daring sins and do you humble yourself with shame and sorrow on account of such violations and transgressions? Does such a knowledge of your sins drive you to penitent tears to Jesus and do you seek to become partaker of His merit? Do you willingly admit the Holy Spirit into your heart, and permit Him to work in you that which is well pleasing unto God?

3.—Instruction upon certain particular subjects of Scripture.

In a highly solemn manner of preparation for the Holy Communion. Such passages besides those

already cited, are here indicated.—Prayer, meditation, a holy desire to learn and to be happy, together with the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, are the best accurate commentators, and with their help God's word will afford you what no man can. Then read and weigh the law and the gospel in the following passages:

The Seven Penitential Psalms, vi., xxxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx., cxlviii.

Exhortations to repentance and patterns of self-examination: Deut. xxviii; Isa. i., 1-20; Isa. xlviii., lviii., lix; Jer. iii., 7; Sam. iii; Dan. ix; Jonah iii; Matt. v., 6, 7 (sermon on the mount); Matt. xviii., 21-33 (a forgiving disposition commended); Luke xviii., 9-14 (the Pharisee and Publican); Rom. ii., 3, 7 (the destruction of sin); Rom. xii-xv (doctrine of holiness); 1 Cor., x., 16-22; xi., 26-32 (wherein the use of the Holy Communion is enjoyed upon us); 1 Cor., xiii.; Eph. iv., 5, 6; 1 Pet., ii., 3, 4; 1 John, ii., 3, 4; James i-v; Rev. ii., 3.

The gospel you will find especially in these passages: Ps. xxii.; Isa. xxxv., xlii., liii., liv., lv., lxi.; Ezek. xxxiv., 11-31; Isa. vi., 47-53; Rom. v., 8; Rev. xxii., xxi.

The last discourses of our Lord are specially appropriate for such preparation (John xiii. to xviii.), and the entire Passion History: Matt. xxvi., xxvii.; Mark xiv., xv.; Luke xxii., xxiii.; John xviii., xix.

CHAPTER IV.

PRAYERS.

SECTION I.—PREPARATORY PRAYERS.

A PRAYER FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE WEEK OF PREPARATION.

Blessed Father in heaven, I thank thee with joyful heart that thou again permittest me to be kindly invited to thy table of grace. As thou didst in the past send out thy servants to call guests to thy supper, so thou art now calling us to come to the marriage feast. O how my soul rejoices at this precious marriage feast, when I am permitted to come to thy table! How my spirit yearns for the food of immortality! With such longing I present myself to thee. I come hungering and thirsting; for in this wilderness of life nothing is so greatly wanting as the heavenly manna upon which my soul may feed continually, or the spiritual drink by which I may be filled with the powers of the future world. O thou faithful Saviour, graciously hear my prayer, and speak to me, as I present myself before thee, in accordance with thy promise: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." O fulfil this to me, and let me become partaker of all the blessings which are to be found in thy body and blood. And in order that I may be an

open vessel to receive the gifts of thy grace, prepare me for thy purpose as thou wouldst have me be. Purge out from me whatever is opposed to thee. Show me by the accusations of thy spirit all that thou holdest against me, and give me strength to lay off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to renew myself in the spirit of my mind, and put on the new man, which is created of God in righteousness and true holiness. How necessary this is, an examination of my heart and life shows. By this I find demonstrated what thy servant Isaiah has said: "All my righteousnesses are as filthy rags before thee, and my sins testify against me." From this burden of sin and debt do thou in grace relieve me, and to this end bless to me the Holy Supper. In this week of preparation let thy power be mighty in my weakness, and help me to put on that wedding-garment without which I dare not appear at thy table. O Jesus, clothe me with the garment of salvation and the robe of righteousness, and help me by true repentance, living faith and holy love to be forever one with thee. Cause in me a salutary unrest, on account of all that is not well-pleasing to thee. Search me thoroughly and see whether there is not some secret enmity and alienation in me, and help me to forgive all offenders, and sincerely to crave forgiveness from all whom I have offended, that as much as lieth in me I may be at peace with all men, and with a perfectly reconciled heart approach thy table. To this end do thou place in a vivid manner before my soul during this week thy bloody sufferings and death, that I by meditation upon the same may gain fresh love, consolation and strength for life. And then do thou make thy Holy Supper to be to me a foretaste of that heavenly supper of which it is said: "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" AMEN.

A PRAYER FOR PROPER PREPARATION.

Almighty God, who triest the heart and reins, and before whom no man living is justified, I beseech thee to afford me a right preparation for the worthy celebration of thy high and holy Supper. My heart yearns for this heavenly means of grace, but I am fearful of being unworthy and of eating and drinking judgment to myself. I find so much of sin and evil in my corrupt heart, and I discern not the least worthiness in me. Into such an unclean vessel thou canst not deposit thy holy gifts of grace. Therefore I call upon thee out of the depths of my undone, sinful condition, and pray thee to have compassion upon me! Thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn and live. Do thou then help me to cultivate my heart, which is like a barren field full of weeds and thorns. Take away the weeds, plow deep furrows of penitence, and scatter the seeds of thy saving means of grace abundantly in me, that a beautiful plant may spring forth for thy kingdom. O Lord, give me thy Holy Spirit, that He with His light may dispel all my darkness, and uncover all the pollutions of my sinful nature, and drive me to sincere sorrow on account of my sin. O my God! do thou Thyself work in me what is well-pleasing unto thee. In accordance with thy promise, remove the stony heart out of my flesh, and give me a new heart and a right spirit. Sanctify me thoroughly so that my spirit, soul and body may be kept unspotted until the coming of my Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

A PRAYER FOR TRUE REPENTANCE.

Merciful God, I would seek thy face! O let me find thee! I beseech thee to hear my humble prayer! I still lack that thorough true repentance without

which I dare not approach thy table. Therefore grant me thy Holy Spirit that He may exercise His office as instructor and correcter, and do thou assist me by a candid examination of my heart and life to know myself aright, to look into the deepest recesses of my being, and see that nothing is lodged there which is not well-pleasing unto thee. Search me thoroughly, examine my heart and prove me, O my God, according to my desire, and see if there is any evil way in me, and lead me into the way everlasting. Guide me by thy Spirit out of darkness into light, out of all delusion and self-deception into the perfect knowledge of the truth; take away from me all pride, and give me true humility. Separate me from the love of the world and of self, and infuse into me most intimate and tender love for thee. Lead me out of unbelief into earnest and joyful faith, which relies entirely upon thee. Work in me such a complete change of heart, mind, and disposition, that I may cast from me everything that is ungodly and sinful. To this end, set before mine eyes, especially thy sufferings, O thou faithful Saviour, and touch my heart by the bitter pains of thy death, which thou didst endure for my sake. O what fearful abomination sin is, which caused thee such terrible sufferings! Let me not be any longer bound even by the most slender tie to such a power of darkness which brings nothing but death and destruction. O Lord, cause a deep aversion for all that is called *world* and *sin* to be continually in me. Fill me with inward smart and pain, because I have manifoldly provoked and offended thee, my Creator, Redeemer and Comforter, and awake in me fresh zeal to live to thee, and serve thee with everlasting fidelity. How soon might my last hour come! How swiftly could thy coming be, O Jesus! As a snare shall the day of thy glorious appearing break in upon all who

dwell upon the earth. Woe unto me, if thou shouldst find me sleeping, and I with the antichristian multitude must weep and tremble before thy face! Therefore assist me to a true state of freedom, deliver me from secret bonds which still hold me fast, and may I, through sincere repentance, be delivered from all the corruption of the old man, and be transformed into a new creature of faith, love and hope. And thus may I heartily rejoice at thy invisible presence in the Holy Supper. O Jesus, convert me, and I shall be converted, help me and I shall be helped. Let thy countenance shine upon me, and do thou help me out of all the misery of sin. Grant me thy righteousness, and I shall have joyful access to the Father and to thy Holy Supper. Renew me in the spirit of my mind, and prepare my heart for thy indwelling, that thou mayest abide in me and I in thee forever. AMEN.

CONFESSION OF SINS.

Holy and Righteous God! With deep humility I confess before thee my many sins and iniquities. Not one of thy holy commandments have I kept as I should, but I have often trangressed all of them in thoughts and desires. Often have I worshipped *other gods* besides thee, I have not loved the as the highest good, I have not clung to thee as my Lord and my God; but my heart in many ways has clung to earthly things and to men, and has valued them more highly and loved them more tenderly than thee, thy truth, thy goodness, and thy ways. I have not placed my trust in thee alone, but have suffered many vain, impure, and evil thoughts to rise in me, and indeed to rule in me.

I have often *used thy name in vain*, have been far too dilatory and drowsy in prayer, have carelessly regarded thy *holy day* and word and the preaching

of the same, and I have not honored thee by constant confession of thee in word and deed. For all that thou hast done for me from thy birth and cross until this day, I have not been sufficiently thankful, nor have even fully known it. I have not taken up thy cross; nor dedicated my affections to thee. I have been too little inclined to deny myself and the world for thy sake. I have not given thee my heart, neither have I sought thy kingdom and righteousness before all things else. O my God, how great is my debt to thee! How numberless are my transgressions, and sins of neglect! How cold is my love, how dead my faith, how weak and imperfect the little good that is in me! How often do I seek only mine own and not thy glory! How often is it that I live, not thou in me!

And how many sins can my fellow men charge against me! I have not been obedient and faithful enough towards my parents, teachers, the government, and all others set over me. I have not been so conscientious in all my acts and the things permitted by me, in all my words and thoughts, that men could not discover me here and there wanting in love, careless, inactive, unfaithful and disobedient. And how far short do I come in brotherly love, and in the love of men in general! Even though thoughts of murder do not rise in me, yet anger and revenge, hatred and bitterness rise often within me. Often I do not forgive when I should, and do not endeavor as far as possible to keep peace. Instead of assisting my neighbor by offering consolation, advice and help, and caring for his bodily and spiritual welfare, I too often think only of myself and my own advantage. And how have I polluted my being with unclean lusts and desires! I often give way to impure thoughts and images in my mind, and do not sufficiently guard

against the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. I serve vanity. I even indulge in things permitted to immoderation, and engage in other fleshly indulgences and pleasures, so that I am lost in a worldly mind. I must also confess to dishonesty and unfaithfulness in the use of thy gifts, my powers of body and soul, the precious moments of time, as well as what thou hast given me of earthly goods. I have not used these as becometh a faithful steward. Yea, even my neighbor's own has not been so sacred to me that I could declare myself free from all unfaithfulness in regard to it. I have not sufficiently avoided dishonesty in dealing and traffic. I have indulged in covetousness, which takes too much and gives too little; in grudging, which seeks after another's goods, or at least lusts after them. I have not been careful enough in guarding my neighbor's good name. Oh how many sins of the tongue witness against me! How much slander, how much unfair judgment, how much talk void of love and unnecessary, how much disparagement of others, and glorying in their shame! Often have I endeavored to take from others their own under the appearance of right, multiplying evil a thousand-fold through lust Moreover I see in me favorite inclinations (here confess them), bosom sins, to which I resign myself, or from which I at least do not guard my mind, and which hinder prayer and pollute my heart. O my God, how great is my wretchedness! Thou hast said: "Cursed is every one that keepeth not all the words of the law to do them." Whither shall I flee from thy curse which on so many accounts falls upon me! O God, have mercy upon me, cast me not away from thy presence. Thou hast made thine only begotten Son to be sin and a curse for me. O for Jesus' sake be gracious unto me. Let His merit avail for me. Let his intercession plead for

me. For His sake fulfil thy promise: "I will blot out thy transgressions as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist." My God, I hope in thee! Let me not come to shame! AMEN.

A PRAYER FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Lord God, gracious and merciful, patient and of great grace and faithfulness, who showest mercy to the thousandth generation, who forgivest iniquity, transgression and sin, and before whom no one is pure, I, a poor debt-burdened sinner, come into thy holy presence, and beseech thee for the forgiveness of all my sins. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who could stand? For one of a thousand sins, I cannot answer thee, and if thou shouldst deal with me according to thy justice, I should be like Sodom and Gomorrah! But with thee there is forgiveness. I hope in thy word. With thee is grace and plenteous redemption; thou wilt deliver thy believing Israel out of all his sins, for thou hast so loved the world as to give thy well beloved Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This precious gospel is my only consolation in my sinful wretchedness. I can not help myself. I can not excuse myself in any way, nor palliate my sins. I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me. In what could I take consolation if not in the door of grace, in Jesus Christ, opened by Himself for me, and in the power of His blood to cleanse from all sin. O Gracious God, let all that thy precious Son has done and suffered for me redown to my benefit. Look upon His anguish and death-pains, and count it as if I myself had expiated my sins. Take His holy life as the purchase money of my own, and impute His sufficient merit to me, so that in the pure robe of His righteousness I may have

joyful access to thy throne of grace, and find rest unto my soul with thee, my reconciled Father. Thou beholdest the miseries which my sins have caused me, and the anxiety under which my soul labors. Thou hast pleasure in the truth hidden in the secret parts, and do thou have regard for this yearning and desire of my spirit for thee, and make me pure and clean and wholly thine. Wilt thou give ear to this my prayer for Jesus' sake, and purify me and wash me white as snow. O my God, lift up thy countenance upon me, and forgive all mine iniquities. Forgive all that I have done against thee and my neighbors. Wash me from all the spots upon my flesh and spirit. Cleanse me from all the guilt which I have incurred on account of want of love, selfishness and pride; and judge not my faults of anger, hatred, envy and covetousness, and many unchaste and fleshy desires. Destroy all evil lusts, sinful thoughts and words, and free me from the guilt which thou hast recorded against me on account of all these. Cast me not away from thy presence, O God, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Cast all my sins in the depths of the sea, that they may be remembered no more! Comfort me again with thy help, and a joyful spirit shall fill me. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Yea, let thy Holy Spirit assure me of the forgiveness of all my sins, and grant me a free and joyful access to thy table of grace. O Jesus, do thou come to me, and as the everlasting High Priest pronounce over me the benediction which thou didst declare to the sick of the palsy: "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." Let me, as he did, rise up joyfully out of my sinfulness, and go home in peace. O heavenly Father, have mercy upon me! O Jesus Christ, grant me thy peace! O Holy Spirit, comfort and renew me, and confirm my soul unto everlasting life! AMEN.

MEDITATIONS ON THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF JESUS.

I.

Blessed Saviour! Thou hast through thine apostle commanded us to show forth thy death till thou come. Thou hast invited me to come to thy table. I would meditate upon thy bloody sufferings and bitter death-anguish with deep adoration and thankfulness. I would accompany thee upon the way of anguish which thou hast trod for me, and I would appropriate to myself all that thou hast done and suffered for me. Without this I should have no consolation and hope either for time or for eternity. I cannot answer thee for one of a thousand sins, and because of so great sinfulness, I have merited nothing but wrath, disgrace, temporal punishment, and everlasting damnation in hell. Whence could I derive comfort, if thou hadst not been wounded for my trangressions and bruised for my sins? O dearest Jesus, thy merit is wholly mine, thy blood shall cleanse me from all sin, thy sufferings shall free me from all guilt, thy death is my life, thy resurrection shall raise me out of the grave, thy ascension shall open heaven to me! Let me during this week learn fully to know these blessings of thy redeeming work. And do thou also through meditation upon thy sufferings and death awaken in me a deep aversion to the sin which inflicted so great pains and bitter death upon thee, so that I may have no desire for the world of sin, but rather for that which is pleasing to thee, earnestly fleeing and avoiding all that is opposed to thee, my precious Redeemer and Saviour, that I may live, suffer and die for thy glory alone, so that I may in the hour of my death joyfully and with good cheer exclaim: Lord Jesus, to thee I live, for thee I suffer, in thee I die; living or dying, thine I am. Make me, O Jesus, forever blessed! AMEN.

II.

O blessed Saviour, grant unto me, in order that I may now meditate upon thy sufferings, an open heart, and do thou magnify before my mind all that thou hast done and suffered on my account. In spirit I would place myself in the room of thy disciples, and take a part in that first farewell hour, in which thy holy soul was so deeply pained and so tenderly affected for the welfare of thy people! O how my heart is astonished when I see thee, who didst come from God and returnedst again to God, girded with a towel, and like a servant wash thy disciples' feet! Help me also to follow this example of humble love, and cause me ever to remember thy commandment, to love one another as thou hast loved us. And how astonishing is all that thou didst speak in those last hours! Write that precious testament which thou as a dying father hast given to thy disciples deep in my heart. that I may be among those that love thee and keep thy word, that thou and the Father may come and make your abode with me. And as thou hast instituted thy Holy Supper on that last night as a means to this end, so let me also as thy disciple eat thy body and drink thy blood for the remission of all my sins, and for the strengthening of new and everlasting life in thee. And as thou didst awaken thy disciples to earnest self-examination by suggesting the question as to who should betray thee, so work in me also by thy Holy Spirit, that I may fully realize all my sins and not deceive myself, as did Peter who trusted in himself and boasted that he would go with thee even into death, and still in that same night denied thee. Therefore I fear on account of myself, and would that thou shouldst bring to light my secret faults, so that I might give myself up entirely to deep penitence, and

be healed by thee, the true Physician, from all the defects of my being. To this do thou help me by thy Holy Spirit, and unite me ever closer to thee, until, being entirely filled with thee, I receive the image of God. AMEN.

III.

As in the garden thou dost pray,
  Blessed Jesus, take me with thee;
Permit me by thy side to stay,
  Never from thee one pace to be.
Separate from all the world beside,
May I be with thee side by side.

Oh, what do I behold in Gethsemane! I see the son of God trembling and in agony; I see the Creator and Ruler of the world lying as a worm in the dust. I see thee whom angels adore sweat anguish as it were drops of blood. Yea, a creature of thy hand, an angel, strengtheneth thee, as thou drinkest the bitter cup of the wrath of God. And still I hear not one word of complaint issue from thy mouth, but thrice, words of humble submission: "Father, not my will, but thine be done." O Jesus, how immeasurable is thy love! It was my guilt that was laid upon thee, and thou didst in my stead bear the wrath of God. Let it not be for naught. Thy hot contest shall bring me to victory, and thy anguish shall make me joyful in the day of judgment! AMEN.

IV.

Dearest Saviour! I thank thee from my heart that thou didst on my account suffer thyself to be apprehended by thy ungodly foes, although with one word thou couldst have laid them upon the ground, and couldst have summoned more than twelve legions of angels against them. O Lord, thy pain on account of

the traitor atones for my unfaithfulness, thy sorrow on account of the bars, swords, and bonds of those who heard thee in the temple atone for my ingratitude and abuse of the means of grace. The love for enemies which thou didst show towards Malchus, atones for my hatred, and helps me to return good for evil. Thy bonds are my deliverance, and thy being burdened with one judgment after another, slandered by false witnesses, scoffed at by rude mockers, condemned by unjust judges, all this shall work my salvation, and free me from all judgment, that I may have in thee righteousness, peace and everlasting joy. AMEN.

V.

Lord Jesus, with deepest adoration I now call to mind the disgraceful death-sentence which was declared against thee by thy people, because thou didst confess to the most precious truth, that thou wast the Son of God Most High. With amazement I see how the children of thy chosen people, whom thou wouldst have gathered under thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, spat in thy face, smote thee with the palms of their hands, and crowned thee; how thou, after a painful, sleepless night, wast delivered into the hands of a heathen governor, accused by shameless lies, mocked by Herod and his frivolous courtiers, and, on account of that fearful cry: "Crucify Him, crucify Him," wast put to the deepest grief. Yea, I behold a murderer preferred before thee. Barrabas is released, and thou, the Just, art sentenced to death. With horror do I behold thee in that torture-chamber, that heathen Common Hall, among the wild rabble of soldiers, who made bare thy holy back and with cruel stripe lacerated it. Thou loveliest and holiest among the sons of men, art spit upon,

smitten and mocked by a purple robe and a crown of thorns, until a heathen man himself said: "Behold, what a man!" O wondrous love! O love beyond measure that brought thee to this martyrdom! I live in the world in joy and pleasure, but thou hadst to suffer. My chastisement lies upon thee, that I may have peace. O my Jesus, glory and praise be to thee forever, for all the bitter pains which thou didst endure for me. O give me to fully enjoy the benefit of it, and grant me the reconciling power of thy sufferings! Thy stripes atone for my lusts and desires; thy nakedness helps me out of the shame of my nakedness before God; thy purple robe purchased for me the garment of salvation and the robe of righteousness; and thy bloody crown of thorns assists me to obtain the crown of glory in heaven. AMEN.

VI.

O Lord Most High, take me now with thee on the way from Gabatha to Golgotha, as thou goest bearing thy cross. Here I see thee weak and weary from the sufferings of the sleepless night of terrors. I see thee lying under the load of the cross, and I weep with the daughters, who trembled at the sight of the awful hill of death. Silent as a lamb led to the slaughter, I see thee go to the place of execution. I watch the wild gang of soldiers, who part thy garments, pierce thy hands and feet with nails, and hang thee on the accursed tree. Oh what torment filled thy person, in the sad hours during which thou didst hang between heaven and earth, between death and life. Lord, accept a thousand thanks for each drop of blood which thou didst shed, for each sting of pain and each spasm of thy members, and especially for the fearful darkness in which thou wast for three hours forsaken of God.

Oh, in this depth of suffering, when thou didst endure the curse of hell, I behold with holy horror the full heinousness of my sin. On my account the Light of the world, the Prince of life, was cast off in the night of death, like water is poured out. Thy bones were all severed, thy heart melted like wax in thy body, thy members dried up as a potsherd, and thou wast laid in the dust of death. O how such distress rends my heart! My Lord and my God! Praise be to thee through all eternity for thy unspeakable love. Speak thou to me from the cross, as thou didst to the thief: "*Thou shalt be with me in paradise.*" Grant me also the blessing of thy victorious word: "*It is finished,*" and let me as a fully justified child of thy and my Father, receive the heavenly inheritance, which thou didst acquire for me on the cross! AMEN.

VII.

No drop of blood too dear for Thee,
Thou gav'st it freely all for me;
O that from fire of love like thine
A flame should come to kindle mine!
O let a sense of thy great grief,
Thy bitterness for my relief,
'Till soul and body separate,
My heart for ever penetrate.

O Precious Saviour! How great is thy love! It is stronger than death! Moved by love thou didst endure all the pangs of death, yea, the pains of hell itself, and didst drink the bitter cup of pain, mixed by the curse of sin, until the last drop was gone. I behold thee pale and emaciated, covered with blood and sweat of death, fainting under heat and thirst, forsaken of God in the very dust of death. My soul trembles before these things which thou permittedst to fall on thee on my account. But my breast breathes lighter, when I behold the end of thy conflict, and hear thee call with

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a loud voice: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The contest is over! Then came rest. I rejoice, but with deep humility I bow before this wonder of wonders, when thou the Prince of life sinkest in death, bowest thy head, and givest up the ghost. O Jesus, thy death is my life. For me didst thou as the everlasting High Priest enter into the holiest of all in order that by thy offering thou mightest reconcile the whole world, and destroy sin, death, the devil, and hell. It was for my good that thou didst rend the veil of the temple, in order that I might, without fear, and in perfect peace, joyfully approach thy throne of grace and worship thee in the priestly attire of thy rightousness. I realize more fully this power of thy death in the quaking of the reconciled earth, and in the graves which opened, out of which arose the bodies of the saints quickened by thee. With these graves I also see mine open, and rejoice in the power of the resurrection, in which my mortal body shall be renewed in glory. Soon my body shall sink into the dust of death. Yea, this day the clock of time may yet strike my last hour. Therefore I linger at thy grave, in which thy holy corpse found its sabbath of rest. This rest sanctifies my rest in the grave, and the life which thou didst again receive, helps me also to a joyful resurrection. O Jesus, with thee I would die! Jesus, with thee would I depart from the grave. Jesus, with thee would I inherit heaven. Jesus, with thee I long to be happy. Jesus, to live with thee forever is my only desire. Jesus, speak the *amen;* for thou alone canst grant it. Yea, Lord, say *amen* to all my prayer, for the sake of thy sufferings and death, and grant me to eat and drink in thy Holy Supper, thy broken body and shed blood. May I be thereby perfectly reconciled to thee, and forever united to thee, glorified with the powers of thy

life and resurrection, and filled with thy divine-human fulless. Unto thee, the great Redeemer, be glory, honor, praise and dominion for ever and ever! AMEN.

PRAYER BEFORE CONFESSION.

Lord God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me, and grant me thy peace! Prepare my poor, unclean heart to worthily approach thy table of grace. O Holy Father, assist me to come to true repentance, break up all hardness and love of sin in my heart. Arouse me from all self-security, slothfulness, and love of the world and self. Free me from all self-deception and pride, and cause in me true sorrow and repentance, that I may with a contrite and broken spirit discover all my sins, confess them heartily before thee, experience inward pain on account of them, and with deep aversion most sincerely hate and avoid all sin, and strive with all my powers to become a new man. O Jesus, thou Physician of souls, heal me of all the pollutions of my sinful nature. As thou didst cleanse the lepers and heal the sick, so do thou wash me in thy precious blood, and cleanse me from all transgressions. Let grace take the place of justice, and forgive all that thou hast against me. Behold, O Lord, I confess before thee and before men, that I have sinned against thee, and have manifoldly and often wilfully provoked and offended thee, my faithful Creator, Redeemer and Comforter. Let this my confession avail before thee, as did the cry of the Publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner." Of him thou didst speak favorably, when thou saidst, that he went down to his house justified. Do thou also thus free me from guilt, and when in the congregation thy ministering servant pronounces such freedom or absolution to me in thy name, or when I appropriate

it to myself out of thy holy word, do thou set the seal of thy Holy Spirit upon this assurance, that I may realize the comfort of the forgiveness of my sins through it, in the same manner as if it had been spoken by thine own mouth. Yea, my Lord, declare to me as to the woman who was a sinner: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." I behold the cross, on which thou didst bear the curse of sin for me. Thy sufferings atone for me. Thy death is my life, and thy grace, which saved the malefactor, do thou also grant unto me. May I through thee enter into the holy of holies, and rejoice in thy heavenly gifts. O Holy Spirit, may thy gracious light illumine me, and thy peace quicken me! Separate from me the old man, and renew me in the spirit of my mind, that I may no longer follow after the things of the earth, but that I may seek that which is above in heaven. O fill me with the powers of the future world, and transform me into a heavenly being!

AMEN.

CONFESSION.

I, a poor sinner, confess before God my heavenly Father, that I, alas, have committed great and manifold sins, not only outward gross sins, but also, and much more, inward sins,—innate blindless, unbelief, doubting, faintheartedness, impatience, pride, evil desires, covetousness, secret animosity, hatred, envy, and other evil propensities, all which are known to my Lord and God, and which I, alas, can not so perfectly discern; for which I am grieved and filled with sorrow, and I heartily implore grace from God through His blessed Son Jesus Christ!

O Lord, fulfill to me thy promises: *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins.

Be of good cheer, my son, my daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Upon these promises and upon the merit of the holy sufferings, death, and resurrection of my blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I base my faith in the forgiveness of all my sins, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* AMEN.

AFTER CONFESSION.

I.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, in whose spirit there is no guile. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Thou, O Lord, art my shield: thou wilt henceforth guard me from all trouble, that I may be spared to glorify thee with joyful heart. Rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful, ye righteous, and exalt Him, ye upright. The Lord hath done great things for us. He is mighty, whose name is holy, and whose mercy is everlasting upon those that fear Him. He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever. He deals not with us after our sins, nor rewards us according to our iniquities. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Therefore shall my mouth praise the Lord, and all flesh shall bless His name for ever and ever. AMEN.

II.

Heavenly Father! thanks and praise be to thee, that through thine only Son Jesus Christ thou hast granted to me, a poor sinner, abundant hope, that all my sins shall be forgiven out of pure grace, and that thou wilt, for Jesus' sake, look upon me as just, own me as thy child, and make me an heir of all thy heavenly gifts. O Lord, let me never depart from thy grace. Fire my mind with holy love for thee, that I may be thine own, and that thou with the Son and the Holy Ghost mayest dwell in me forever. To this end, bless to me thy precious Supper in which thou dost unite thyself with me forever. Thoroughly cleanse my heart, so that it may be an open, clean vessel, in which thou wilt deposit the full riches of thy grace. O come, Lord Jesus, give thyself to me, and take me to thee, that I may, body, soul and spirit, be a holy offering, entirely thine own, and that thou mayest delight in me forever. AMEN.

SECTION II. — COMMUNION PRAYERS.

I.—PRAYERS BEFORE COMMUNION.

PRAYER FOR COMMUNION-DAY.—MORNING.

Blessed Saviour, in thy name, I, with sincerest joy, greet this blessed day on which thou desirest to impart to me thy body and blood. Praise and thanksgiving be unto thee from the depths of my heart, that thou hast preserved me until now, and dost again open before me this precious occasion of grace. O Jesus, do thou visit me from above, as the sun of righteousness, the Light and Life of the world, the Physician

of my poor soul, the Righteousness and Reconciliation of my whole life, the great Seeker of the lost, the everlasting High Priest, King, and Prince of peace of all who come to God by thee. Come, lay thy hand upon my head, bless me out of Zion, fill me freely with thy grace, and prepare me this day to do thy will. As by thy grace I have been awakened from the darkness of night and sleep this morning, so may I arise out of the old man, and cast from me all, even the slenderest ties, which bind me to sin and the creature. And as I put upon my body my garments, so do thou clothe my inner man, that I may be fitly attired to appear at thy table. Cleanse me from all iniquity, wash me white as snow in thy precious blood. Grant me thy perfect righteousness, and clothe me with the garment of thy salvation, so that I may be fit to appear at thy marriage feast. O how my soul hungers for the heavenly manna which thou hast provided for me in this wilderness of life! How my spirit thirsts for that drink of life in which thou bestowest upon me so great powers! As the heart panteth for the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. Wilt thou manifest thyself to me in the riches of thy grace, and permit me to draw the water of life from the wells of salvation. O my Lord, prepare for thyself a place in my heart. Sanctify me to be a clean vessel of grace, in which thou wilt deposit the costly treasure of thy body and blood. Purge out the old leaven of my nature, that I may keep thy Holy Supper with the leaven of sincerity and truth, and feed upon thee as the true Passover, slain for me, that my heart might be sprinkled with thy blood, so that the destroying angel should have no power over me. Count me among thine own flock, thy peculiar people, thy royal priesthood, and may I ever cling to thee as a member of thy body. To this end bless this

day, my hearing, prayer, eating and drinking, to my soul's good in everlasting life. O Jesus, glorify thy great name in me and in all the world, even as thou livest and reignest with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. AMEN.

PRAYERS BEFORE COMMUNION.

I.

Merciful God and Father, the hour of the Holy Supper is approaching, in which thou sayest to all that are heavy laden: *Come, for all things are now ready.* O how my heart is moved by this gracious call! It is true I find in me no worthiness to come to thy table; but as thou didst send out thy servants into the streets and lanes of the city to invite the poor, maimed, lame and blind, and bring them to thy supper; yea, as thou didst even send them out upon the highways and hedges to compel the suffering and forsaken ones to come in, that thy house might be filled, so dost thou also graciously invite me. In obedience to this invitation, I, a poor sheep, venture to come and present myself before thee, assured that thou wilt not despise me. O Lord, look not upon my unworthiness, but consider how thirsty I am. Let the worthiness of thy beloved Son avail for me, and behold the garments of His righteousness, which I, through faith in His blood, have put on. On His account fulfil to me thy promise: "I will blot out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will remember no more thy sins." Yea, blot out all the guilt and curse of my sins, together with all their influence and delights. Destroy my members which are upon the earth: fleshly lusts, the lusts of the eyes, the pride of life, covetousness, envy, malice, hatred, and all thoughts, words, and deeds which are

not well-pleasing unto thee. Help me to perfectly lay aside the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and renew me in the spirit of my mind, that I may put on the new man, which is created by thee in righteousness and true holiness. O thou faithful Father, pour out thy Holy Spirit richly upon me, that He may sanctify me to be a temple into which thou wilt enter through thy Holy Supper with peace and life, love and truth, power and blessedness. Lord, I wait for thy salvation. Glorify in me and all communicants at thine altar thy great name, and finally conduct us to the marriage supper of the Lamb in thine everlasting glory. AMEN.

II.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who art the living bread from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall live forever, I thank thee from the depths of my heart for thy great love in now permitting me again to come to thy holy table of grace to eat thy holy flesh and drink thy blood. O thou King of heaven and earth, prepare me to worthily appear in thy presence. Fill me with thy likeness, that, in the pure robe of thy righteousness, I may be well-pleasing to thy Father. Grant me thy Holy Spirit as the true Comforter, Teacher and Guide, that He may fashion me according to thy will, open and sanctify my heart, so that thou canst keep with me and I with thee thy Holy Supper. O my Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my soul shall be healed. I am all unclean, make me clean. I am poor and miserable, make me rich and happy. I am dead in myself, make me alive in thee. Take all my debt upon thee, and bestow thy perfect blessing and all-sufficient merit upon me. As Israel in the wilderness excited thy

compassion so that thou didst not suffer them to faint by the way, and didst satisfy them with bread, so do thou not leave me unfed and unblest, but sanctify me by the rich gifts of thy house, feed me, and give me to drink in body, soul and spirit, unto everlasting life. O how thankful is my heart that thou hast in the Holy Supper established a memorial of thy marvellous death, O thou gracious and merciful God! How the blessed bread sets before mine eyes thy holy body, which thou amidst the bitterest pangs of death didst give for me! In the blessed cup I see the blood, which thou didst shed for the remission of my sins, and I remember how thy ardent course of suffering was at every step attended with pain, disgrace, torment and torture. O what hast thou done for me! How dearly have I been purchased with thy precious blood! How wonderfully have I been rescued by thy sacrificial death! But more. I am now to eat thy body and drink thy blood, and thus receive the forgiveness of all my sins and everlasting life. O let this purpose of thy love be this day fulfilled! Grant me, along with thy body, the full power of thine atonement, and cleanse me from all the stains of my sinful being through thy blood. At thy table of grace do thou absolve me from all guilt and punishment, and make me internally certain of the same, so that as a reconciled and pardoned child of thine and my Father, I may have nothing to fear, but everything to hope. And do thou, through thy Holy Supper, work a fresh union between me and thee, and between me and all the members of thy body, that we may be one body and one spirit, in sincere love and fellowship. Do unto me according to thy promise: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him, and hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Grant me thy life, and fill me

with thy righteousness, love and truth, that I may evermore be like thee, forsake all sin, and following after thee in the fear of God may progress in sanctification. Sanctify me thoroughly, so that my spirit, soul and body may be unspotted until the great day of thy coming. Confer upon my body the powers of the resurrection, which thy glorified body eaten in the Holy Supper possesses, and through this celebration of thy death, do thou fill this germ of the resurrection body with new life-powers. O thou Prince of life, plant in me the seeds of immortality and a heavenly existence. O thou wonderful Physician, cause thy body and blood to be an effectual medicine for my soul and body. O thou King of righteousness and peace, let me taste the powers of the future world, and assist me so that my conversation may already be in heaven, and with the songs of praises of those who are perfect in righteousness before thy throne, may my heart and life ascend as a hymn of thanksgiving for thy grace and holy incense to thy praise, until I shall behold thee in thy glory. O may I then be admitted to that great supper in which thou shalt fully, and finally wed thyself to thy chosen ones, so that they shall not only sit with thee at thy table, but reign with thee through all eternity. AMEN.

III.

Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, honor, praise and glory be to thee, because thou hast hitherto helped me, and dost now again grant me to eat of thy most precious testament. O gracious Father, guard me against an unworthy use of this exalted means of grace, that I may not eat and drink unto judgment, and thus be condemned by thy justice, when thy pity would save me. Make me to be worthy, and do thou

sanctify my heart to be thy temple. O Jesus, fill me with thy grace, and help me to separate myself from the world and its lusts forever, because thou wilt so highly rejoice and quicken me. O thou faithful Redeemer and Saviour, infuse into me by means of thy body and blood all the virtues of thy life and death unto eternal life. Enter thou into *our* congregation, as thou didst on the evening before thy death, meet with thy disciples and keep with them thy Holy Supper. As thou didst address them, so speak to us, saying: "*Take eat; this is my body which is given for you. Take drink; this is my blood shed for the remission of your sins.*" Make thyself known to our inner man, that we may see thee, as it were, bodily, hear thy word of blessing, and feel thy peace. May thy Holy Supper be to us a type and fortaste of the joy of thy visible coming, for which our hearts sincerely long. Prepare us on this great day for thy coming, but let us first experience in a living manner thy inward coming. O thou truest Saviour, heal and sanctify my soul by thy sweet advent; unite me with thee through thy living presence, and establish an everlasting bond between me and thee, so that neither pleasure nor fear, death nor life, height nor depth, shall separate me from thy love.

O Holy Spirit, penetrate me throughout with thy kindness, glorify in me the Father and the Son, and make me by means of the union with Jesus' flesh and blood partaker of the divine nature, that I may no longer cling to earth or self, but have my home, my treasure, my all, in heaven. Thus may the divine Majesty bless me, the Holy Trinity protect me, the eternal Unity preserve me, immeasurable mercy shelter me, unspeakable charity apologize for me, the most exalted truth of God cover me, the deepest knowledge of Christ strengthen me, the boundless goodness of the

Lord confirm me! The grace of the Father rule in me! The wisdom of the Son quicken me! The power of the Holy Spirit enlighten me! The Lord bless me and keep me: the Lord make His face shine upon me, and be gracious unto me: the Lord lift up His countenance upon me and give me peace. AMEN.

RENEWAL OF THE BAPTISMAL VOW BEFORE COMMUNION.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. AMEN.

The Triune God strengthen me in this faith through His Holy Supper, that I may in accordance with my baptismal vow anew, renounce the devil and all his works and ways, the pomp and vanity of the sinful world, and all sinful lusts of the flesh, and engage to serve God and my Lord Jesus during my whole life, in the strength of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

II.—PRAYERS DURING AND AFTER COMMUNION.

I.

Merciful God and Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word

only and my soul shall be healed. O heal and sanctify me! Give thyself unto me, and take me unto thee. Wash me from all sin through thy blood, and join thyself to my soul forever. Thy body make my body to be a holy temple! Thy blood cover me with the garment of thy perfect righteousness, that I may rejoice and say: "*My Friend is mine and I am His.*" AMEN.

II.

O Lord Jesus Christ, thy holy body sanctify my body, soul and spirit, and nourish me with the heavenly virtues of a happy resurrection. AMEN.

III.

O Lord Jesus Christ, thy holy blood wash me from all sin, and open for me an entrance to the holy of holies of thy heavenly glory. AMEN.

IV.

O Thou Lamb of God that takest away the sin of the world, thy holy body and thy precious blood strengthen, sanctify, and confirm me and all who serve thee, in the true faith, love and hope unto everlasting life. AMEN.

V.

My Lord and God, thy holy flesh and blood renew and increase in me the precious gifts of the Holy Spirit to the strengthening of my faith, to my establishment in true godliness, patience in suffering, and the blessed hope of everlasting life. AMEN.

III.—PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION.

I.

We thank thee, Lord Jesus Christ, for thy sufferings and death, and for thy grace, which thou hast assured and appropriated to us through thy holy flesh and blood in the Holy Supper. And we pray thy merciful goodness to preserve us in true faith in thee, and in fervent love to thee and our neighbors. Grant us also Christian patience and constant obedience in life, sufferings and death; who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. AMEN.

II.

O thou faithful God and Father, I thank thee with my whole heart for the great grace which thou hast showed unto me. I have now again received the most precious pledges of thy love, and am assured that thou hast forgiven all my sins and granted me all things! When thou art for me, who can be against me? As thy reconciled child I look joyfully into the opened heaven, and in the priestly garb of my Jesus I approach thy throne of grace. As the Angels prostrate themselves before thee with heavenly songs, so may I also with them come and sing a new song to thy praise. Thou hast delivered me, O thou faithful God! No foe can terrify or accuse me. Thou art mine, I am thine. None can separate us. O merciful Father, establish me forever in this love, and as my heart now burns with desire to cling to thee alone, do thou always continue this flame of love, and so bind me to thy paternal heart that I can not live without thee, without thy peace, and without fellowship with thee. O let thy Holy Spirit daily and hourly work in me, so that

I as thy temple, thy priest, thy offering, may be thine entirely, be one with thee, and glorify thee in all my doings. O thou who art eternal Love, fill me entirely with thyself; let me die to the world, but live in thee forever! Be thou my dearest life, my sweetest joy, my confidence, my stronghold, my richest treasure, my defence, my heart's delight, my one and my all. Make me to see Thee in all, and all in Thee. Make thy will to be mine; close my eyes and ears to all that is opposed to Thee, and fill me with a heavenly mind, which forgets what is behind and stretches forth to that which is before, toward the heavenly prize of thy love and glory. Be thou my home in which I rest until this earthly pilgrimage be ended, and I shall see thee face to face, and then at last rejoice with joy unspeakable. AMEN.

III.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. O blessed Jesus, thou affectionate friend of my soul, with all my powers I thank thee and sing praise unto thee, for thou hast done great things for me. Thou hast given thyself to me. Thy flesh I have eaten as the true food, thy blood have I drunk as the true drink. O how my heart burned within me, as thou didst so wonderfully draw near to me, and so graciously gavest me to know thee! I have tasted of thy kindness, thy sweet peace hath quickened me, thy love like the sun hath warmed me, thy holy body is my nourishment unto everlasting life, thy precious blood hath washed me from all sin, thy life-giving power hath penetrated me throughout, the fruit of thy sufferings hath refreshed me, the efficacy of thy death hath loosed my bonds, the life-power of thy glorious resurrection hath filled me, and the glorification of thy ascension hath shined into me. Thus I

behold heaven opened, and have my home in thee. Where thou art, there shall thy servant be. He that eateth thy flesh and drinketh thy blood abideth in thee and thou in him. To this let my faith hold fast, and help me so that nothing may hinder such fellowship with thee. Make me to consider all things as evil which are opposed to thy love. He who hath thee, hath all things. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what is already prepared for those who love thee. I have in thy Holy Supper experienced something of it. Open still more and more to me the treasures of thy grace, and let me fully enter into the heavenly life. New faith, new love, new obedience, new hope thy flesh and blood work in me. Let new spiritual powers flow into me from thy sanctuary, so that I as thy pure temple may have Thee in me, and thy life glorify itself in me, until I shall be completely filled with Thee, and receive God's image, and sing the new song in the Kingdom of thy glory. AMEN.

IV.

Lord Jesus, my dear Saviour, I thank thee with my whole heart and soul, that thou hast in thy Holy Supper given me thyself to eat. Let me now proceed in the strength of this heavenly food, as did thy servant Elijah; and thus may I go humbly through the wilderness of this life, and come to Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. To this blessed fellowship I shall belong as a member of thy body, and to this thou hast anew consecrated and sanctified me through thy precious

flesh and blood. O let all the great designs of thy perfect love be fulfilled in me! Bless the Holy Supper to the fresh strengthening of my faith, to the forgiveness of all my sins, to the creating of strength in godliness and in love towards thee and all men, to the increase of patience in suffering, and the blessed hope of everlasting life. To this end help me by thy Holy Spirit, which thou art willing daily to bestow upon me richly, so that what I have now received, I may keep, and let no enemy despoil me of it. Satan will now spare no pains to destroy thy holiness in me, and to make of none effect the blessing which thou hast bestowed upon me. After such most precious seasons of grace there often come the severest temptations to my soul to cause it to be inert, to rock it to sleep, and delude it into security. Therefore help me to watch earnestly, and lock my mind, thoughts, and all the avenues of my heart against Satan and the world, and let me in thy strength overcome everything which tends again to lead me from thee. Free me also from the love of myself, that I may not fall again into my old sins, but in the power of thy death may I daily die to all sin, and live in righteousness, that all my works may be done in love, as thou, O precious Saviour, hast loved us and given thyself for us. O eternal love, which caused thee to offer thyself for me! Help me that I may also offer up myself entirely to thee, and thus remain in perpetual fellowship with thee and all believers, so that my whole life may be one continual pure service of God, that I may wait before thee in the priestly garb of thine own righteousness, live, suffer, and die to thee, that thou mayest be my all in all, and I, in the strength of thy body and blood and of the resurrection of thy body may attain to everlasting life, and at last eat and drink with thee at thy heavenly table of grace in thy kingdom above. AMEN.

PRAYER FOR COMMUNION-DAY EVENING.

Merciful God and Father, who givest far more abundantly than we ask or know, my soul would praise thee at the close of this day of grace, which has again afforded to me thy boundless love. It is plain that thou wilt not leave me in death, but hast taken my soul to thee, so that it perish not. O Jesus, what hast thou acquired for me! As surely as I have eaten thy body and drunk thy blood, so certain it is that thou lovest me, hast forgiven all my sins, and desirest me to be a child of the Father, yea, a joint-heir with thee to glory. *O my Jesus, thou in me and I in thee!* This unspeakable word of grace I do not yet understand, for I shall only in eternity fully comprehend the blessing of thy Holy Supper. But this I feel and know, that this inner union with thee is better than all worldly wisdom, nobility, pleasure, honor, joy, and renown. O Lord my God! *thou in me and I in thee.* So let it ever be. Keep me in thee, or I shall soon again be out of thee. It is easy for earthly things and creatures to take me captive again, although I know that they can not satisfy me nor give me peace. Thou only canst give life and all sufficiency. Therefore let me be afraid wherever I find thee not, and do thou increase my strength so that I may not again pollute the wedding garment with fresh sins. Thy love becomes daily sweeter than all the sweetness of the world, which in itself is paltry and unsatisfactory, as I have often with sorrow and shame discovered. Yea, free me from the subtle bonds of the world, deliver me from its fickle and dissipating mind, and receive me so completely into thyself that my whole being may rest and live in thee. O Jesus, let thy Spirit possess me forever! Thy Sun of grace continually illumine my soul! Thy holy body preserve

me! Thy precious blood permeate me! Thy sufferings sanctify me! Thy death awaken me to everlasting life! Thy righteousness avail for me before the Father! Thy resurrection glorify my perishing body, that it may become like thy glorified body! Thy ascension plant me into the heavenly life, and open to me the holiest of all! Thy perpetual and effective priesthood invest me ever with all thy heavenly gifts of grace! Thy glorious Kingship deliver me from all enemies and raise me to glory! In this blessed hope I will joyfully close mine eyes now in sleep, and at last in death. Thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me! Thy name is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe. In this tower let me and all mine rest this night and at all times. Thou art the light which lighteth up all darkness; into thy hands I commend my body and soul; thou wilt watch over me, and faithfully provide for all my wants. I cast all my care upon thee. With thee there is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore! Let the Sabbath joy which thou hast to-day afforded me, long remain in my heart, and enkindle thy love in me that I may daily be filled with thy praise, and ever glorify thee for thy goodness. Thus I would prepare myself for the great day of thy coming, when thou shalt appear glorious to thy saints, and wonderful to all believers. Then let me stand joyful in thy presence among the wise virgins whose oil burns brightly in their lamps, and whom thou joyfully receivest into the bride-chamber. O come, Lord Jesus! We long for thy appearance at the last awful day. The Spirit and the bride say, come! And let all that hear say, come! Yea, come, Lord Jesus. AMEN.

SECTION III.—PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO COME TO THE TABLE OF THE LORD FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Address.

Grace be with you, and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ:—

Beloved in the Lord, you have in Confirmation received anew the full blessing of your holy Baptism. As surely as your Baptism is the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, so surely is God your precious God and Father, all your sins are forgiven out of pure grace for Christ's sake, and he will receive you unto himself as His dear child and an heir of all the heavenly gifts. But remember also, that as the Lord has opened heaven to you and has given you the most precious promises, so you have also pledged yourself to Him, have denied the devil and all his works and ways, the pomp and vanity of this sinful world, and all the sinful desires of the flesh. On the other hand, you have bound yourself to serve God and your Lord Jesus so long as you live. This holy bond is the greatest fortune of your life, your greatest honor, and most precious hope.

But the Lord will do more than this. He gives you not only the most precious promises, the richest heavenly gifts, but *He gives you Himself.* Already in Baptism you were according to the appropriate formula of this sacrament baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But this union with God is not to consist in His merely taking you to Himself, but in your giving yourself to Him and entering into Him. The giving of the Lord to you and your rendering your heart to Him, takes place in a most affectionate manner in the Holy

Supper, which is made accessible to you through Confirmation. What was at first received in Baptism is perfected in the Holy Supper. Here the Lord gives Himself to you to be eaten. Here He does not merely stand outside of you and in your presence with His great kindness and rich grace, but He enters into you, and makes His abode in you. In eating His body and drinking His blood you take Him into you, and His word is true, which says: "He that eateth me, he also shall live because of me." (John vi: 57). Therefore you can have no better source of joy than this, that the Lord comes to you and eats with you. In Baptism and Confirmation you see heaven opened, but in the Holy Supper heaven comes to you and into you, and the Son of God joins Himself to you, so that you become *the Lord's beloved.* On this account the Holy Supper is called a *marriage feast*, that is, a feast of the greatest importance, in which the Lord of heaven and earth imparts Himself to a poor worm of the dust, and fills him with the heavenly powers of His life and love. Therefore be glad and rejoice in your Lord. All the joys of your youth, the highest delights of your childhood, the sweetest comforts in the embrace of your parents and in the circle of your playmates, are not to be compared to this high festal joy which your heart may find in the Holy Supper. As you, full of joyful anticipation have always looked forward to the precious Christmas festival, and your heart beat with hurried stroke on that holy eve, as the door opened and the brilliant light dazzled your eyes, and the *Christmas-tree* moved you into ecstacies, and the gifts of loved ones made you happy, so here a more beautiful light shines upon you, and lights up the costlier gifts of the table of the Lord. What gifts and what glory are to be compared to the blessed bread with which you receive the Holy Body of

Jesus? And what can be compared to the blessed cup which presents to you the Holy Blood of the Son of God? This blood cleanses you from all sin; this body nourishes you unto immortality; this celebration lifts you up out of the miseries of your nature, and transforms you into a heavenly being, so that you are one with Christ, and shall remain in Him and He in you. Do you rejoice at Christmas, because He is born *for* you? Then rejoice at the Holy Supper, because here it is His will to be born *in* you, that you as a member of His body may derive strength and life from Him, and that you as a member of His holy Church may belong to the chosen ones, whose life here is hid with Christ in God, but who shall at last stand before His throne as priests in everlasting glory, serving Him in His sanctuary. Behold, such is the dignity which your Jesus wills to bestow upon you, with which to enter into riper age. What is all the honor, joy, and glory of the world compared with this? O give to Him your heart? No one contemplates your good as He does. Nowhere will you find greater happiness than in His presence. All worldly things are vain, entirely vain. All earthly stars grow dim in the presence of Jesus, the Sun of grace. The freshest flowers of youth often suddenly wilt here. Every year life shall become more earnest to you. Each hour may be the last. And if to-day the gates of eternity were opened before you, to what would you cling, in what would you comfort yourself? Alas, how poor and unfortunate that soul who has no Saviour! He alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man can come to the Father but by Him. In Him alone do we find rest for our souls; and so kind is He, that He welcomes *all* and despises none. He calls the poorest and neediest to Him, and says: "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Come then. If the King (or ruler) of your country should invite you to his table, put upon you the most beautiful garment, and cover his table with the costliest food, this would be the greatest honor he could confer upon you. But here you are invited by *Jesus, the King of kings;* He offers you the garment of His righteousness, and in this dress you are to approach Him, and He will give you His own flesh and blood to eat and to drink, and make you partaker of all His heavenly gifts. Let go all that is not well-pleasing to Him, put off from you your polluted garment, renounce the things of this world, in which your foolish heart delights, and forsake men, who would seduce you into sin and frivolity. Give your heart to the Lord. He has purchased it with His blood. What love is so great as that which He has shown to you? This love offers and seeks to make you well-pleasing to God, *a new creature.* Do you feel weak, do you feel despondent on account of a want of faith and spiritual life, do you think yourself unworthy of so great grace? Then pray, and pray in a childlike spirit. As a child would ask his parents for bread, so pray the Lord to give you a new heart and a right spirit. As sure as you pray, the Lord will hear you, even if you do not at once realize it. Only pray as Jacob did, "I will not let thee go, till thou bless me." It is most pleasing for Him to know that you are saved. For this reason He laid down His life for you amid unspeakable torments. Then trust in Him entirely; He will make all well; and what He began in your Baptism and again renewed in Confirmation, He will perfect in the Holy Supper, and finally in everlasting glory. Come with humble repentance, childlike faith, and sincere desire after Christ. He demands nothing which is too much for you. He only desires that you love Him, and earnestly long for Him to take you to

heaven. And who would be so foolish as not to desire this? For who can be more blessed than a child of God? He has heaven already on earth.

NOTE.—As a means of *preparation*, you can use all that is set apart in this book for that purpose. Or instead of this, read the *Passion History* (Matt. xxvi and xxvii, Mark xiv and xv, Luke xxii and xxiii, and John xviii and xix). But do not merely *read* it, but *let your mind rest upon each passage*, and let it by the power of the Spirit of God be impressed upon your heart. Read and consider also prayerfully the Farewell Discourses of Jesus (John xiii to the xvii). Examine yourself strictly according to the *Sermon on the Mount*, and pray to God in sincerity and childlike simplicity. In order to furnish you somewhat of a guide, I give you the following

PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO ARE PREPARING TO COME FOR THE FIRST TIME TO THE HOLY COMMUNION.

Blessed Father in heaven, I thank thee with my whole heart that thou permitted me, a poor child, to come to thy table of grace. O Lord, I am not worthy of thy love. I do not yet feel sufficiently poor and weak. I am too unripe in spiritual things. My faith, my knowledge and love of all that is good—yea, all that is within me, is yet so defective, and there is still so much in me that is unclean and sinful, that I dare not even look up to thee, and that I should indeed fear to come to thy table. But I remember thy word: (Isa. xli: 14 and lxvi: 2.) "Fear not, thou worm of Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will keep thee," and I will look graciously upon him that is of a contrite heart, and reveres my word. Out of thine own mouth, O Jesus, I hear the word (Luke xii, 32): "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good

pleasure to give you the Kingdom;" "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Upon this friendly invitation, moved by thy love for children, I, a weak child, am constrained to present myself to to thee. Do thou, O faithful Saviour, love me, and as thou didst lay thy hands upon those children, so lay thy hands upon my head. Whatever is weak in me, do thou strengthen, and whatever is unclean and sinful, do thou cleanse by thy blood. Alas, how much has appeared to thee during my past life which was not well-pleasing to thee! When I look over my childhood, I find so much of rudeness and sin, so much frivolity and foolish doings, so much disobedience towards my parents and teachers, so much indolence and carelessness, so much indifference to thy holy word and to prayer, so much of strife, contention, anger, envy, illwill, want of love, and many unclean lusts and desires, immodesty, desire after the goods of others, as well as much fickleness, given to talking, disorder, and other things by which I greatly grieved and pained my parents and others. O God, enter not into judgment with me! Let grace abound instead of justice, and for the sake of Jesus Christ forgive all the sins of my whole life; pardon also my secret sins, blot out the sins of my childhood and youth, and cast them into the depth of the sea, so that they may not be mentioned at thy judgment-seat. O Jesus, wash me in thy blood until I am white as snow, purify me and make me clean. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my transgressions. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Behold, Lord, how I long for thy salvation. I would be thine entirely and forever. Here is my heart, take it, poor and impure as it is, and

fashion it according to thy pleasure. Thou canst change me as thou wilt. Hold me ever in thy hand, and keep me in thy saving fellowship, that nothing may separate me from thee. Prepare me now to receive thy Holy Supper. I know not how to rightly receive it, in order that I may not be unworthy. Grant me thy Holy Supper. Give me true repentance, true and living faith, and an ardent desire after thee, which shall make me one with thee. Fashion me as thou wouldst have me be. Take away from me all that is not well-pleasing to thee, and grant all things needful for me. Give thyself to me, and take me unto thee, and glorify thou me according to the riches of thy grace. AMEN.

PRAYER FOR THOSE ABOUT TO APPROACH THE TABLE OF THE LORD FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Merciful God and Father, now the glad day has come for which my soul has long yearned. O how gracious art thou, that thou hast extended to me also, a poor, unworthy child, the invitation to come to thy holy Table! I thank thee with my whole heart for this love and condescension. I pray thee draw me unto thee as a mother takes to her bosom her child. Clothe me with the garment of salvation and the robe of righteousness, that in this chaste attire I may be worthy to appear at thy table of grace, and eat and drink with thee. O Jesus, on thee I rely. Thou alone canst give what I need. Have mercy upon me, and as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, so take me under the mantle of thy righteousness, hold me with thy strong hand, and grant me the full merit of thy holy life, sufferings, death, glorious resurrection and ascension, together with thy intercession at the right hand of God. Do thou intercede for me, and

provide for me in my poverty and weakness. O thou Lord of riches, fill me with thy gracious gifts. O thou God of power, fill me with thy power. O thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me and grant me thy peace! Take away from me all my sin and guilt, and grant me instead thy perfect righteousness. Fulfill in me thy promise: "*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him, and hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*" Grant me this, because thou hast bought me, a worthless sheep, with thy blood, and hast promised to be with me always unto the end of the world. O Lord, I will not let thee go until thou bless me. As thou didst to the daughter of Jairus and the young man at Nain, so do thou awaken me to a new spiritual life; and as John leaned upon thy breast, grant me also thy love. Yea, Lord, let me evermore abide in thee, so that in thy strength I may overcome all evil, and yield thee a pure life. Thy body and blood sanctify me unto everlasting life, and thy love now already point me to heaven opened. AMEN.

NOTE.—In addition to these prayers the *preparatory prayers*, before given, may be used. But best of all, pray with your own heart, and seek out of its burning to enter into proper fellowship with God in prayer and life. Then come, without fear, to the table of the Lord, and in a childlike manner receive what He gives.

AFTER COMMUNION.

The foregoing prayers may be used; or better, fall down upon your knees, render the thanks of your heart to the Lord, and praise Him for the fresh confidence and pure zeal of a holy youth.

How has it been with you at the Holy Supper? Have you received special nourishment from the Lord, and have you found special happiness? Do not suppose that all shall be right with you at once, and that you are already a perfect Christian. Many have supposed themselves almost in heaven, and on this account forgot hell and its influences, became proud, and ceased to watch over themselves; their pious emotions soon fled, and feelings of a different sort again filled their minds and hearts. They again returned to the love of the world, and thus fell from their first love, ceased to know the Lord, and were almost unable to find Him again. Rejoice when the Holy Supper has quickened you in heart and richly blessed you, but forget not that this is only a weapon in the warfare, not the battle itself, much less the victory. Feelings are subject to change. To-day they flame up towards heaven, to-morrow, or even to-day yet, they may kiss the world. For this reason let faith, or rather, the *Jesus* of your faith, be your stronghold, and estimate far above all changeful feelings secret love for Him, and an earnest desire to please Him; and hold fast to these.

But if you have not found in the Holy Supper what you expected, if the blessing which you had pictured to yourself has not been realized, and it turns out that you are as you were before, know this, that the workings of the Spirit are often unobserved and still are accomplished; in the same manner as God manifested Himself to Elijah, not in the whirlwind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in *the still small voice*, (I Kings, xix., 12). The blessing depends not upon our feeling but upon the word and promise of God. We dare not measure the blessing of God by feelings, but by the measure of our faith and love to Jesus. It is thus that we become possessors of what He has acquired for us. What He grants us is not perceived by the eyes. It

does not change our appearance like a new garment does, in which we look different from what we did before we put it on. The Spirit of God often accomplishes the deepest changes in secret, a thing which we see illustrated in vegetation. The plant is hid in the bosom of the earth and gradually, urged by a secret process, it comes out to view. And the deeper the root, the firmer the plant. Only wait. The blessing is often only the more rich, because we at first perceive little of it. Cling simply and in child-like confidence to Jesus, and daily implore His grace. He will hear you, even though you do not at once see and feel it. Blessed are they who neither see nor feel, and yet believe.

SECTION IV.—COMMUNION PRAYERS FOR THE SICK.

PREPARATORY PRAYER.

Merciful God and Father, who despisest not the sighing of the suffering, nor the longing of the contrite heart, look down with favor upon me and bless me with thy peace and help. Behold, Lord, I am poor and miserable, sick in body and soul, and I know of no consolation unless thou have mercy upon me. Therefore I long for that best medicine, O faithful Saviour, which thou hast prepared in thy holy body and blood. O thou eternal Prince of Life, grant me life in the midst of my death; thou heavenly Light, illumine my darkness; thou perfect Righteousness, free me from all unrighteousness, and blot out all my iniquity. It is true I am not worthy of all this. I have not only deserved my present sickness but still greater pains; yea, the pains of hell have I deserved on account of my many sins and transgressions. Oh,

how careless and indifferent did I live in days of health How little did I think upon thee and eternity; how little of the "one thing needful!" How little have I thanked thee for life and health, and for the numberless spiritual and temporal benefits of thy love! How foolishly my heart delighted itself in the things of this world, and earthly life, as if my eternal home were here below! What base lusts and desires did I suffer to play upon my mind and sometimes to issue in acts! By how much lovelessness, anger, hatred, envy, covetousness and other evil propensities did I suffer myself to incur guilt. How little did I think that the only way of finding salvation was by sincere repentance and hearty faith! O Lord, whence shall I draw comfort? Here I lie, a poor worm of the dust, and if thou should'st crush me, I have merited nothing better, for I can not answer for one of a thousand of my sins. But still I hear thy word (Ezek. xxxiii., 11): "*As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*" This is a welcome *star* in my darkness, and the perfect *Sun of grace* arises for me when I look toward Golgotha, and see thee, O Jesus, bleeding in my stead, and hear thee say to the malefactor worthy of death: "TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE." O Lord my God, how great is thy love! Thou hast died that I might live. Thou didst bear my curse and the curse of the whole world, that I might be just and be saved. Thy blood cleanses me from all sin, and the pollutions of my corrupt nature. This alone is my consolation. Only grant me the right faith, that I may appropriate to myself all thou has procured for me. Heal me, O heal my soul! I am sick and sorrowful, take away the torments which trouble me. And all the corruption which the fall of Adam has brought upon me, and that which I have brought upon myself, thy blood, O thy

blessed Physician, shall wash away, and allay all my misery. Yea, heal me of all my sickness of soul and body. Sanctify me also through thy Holy Spirit, that I may wholly surrender to thee, and serve thee with new zeal and love. Strengthen me, so that in thy strength I may overcome; make of me a new man, that I through true conversion may be born anew, and through thee enter into the heavenly life. O Jesus, have mercy upon me. Let thy strength be powerful in my weakness, and prepare me to be a worthy communicant at thy Holy Supper, that it may contribute to the strenghtening of my faith, the forgiveness of my sins, my everlasting union with thee, and the firm hope of a blessed resurrection. Penetrate my feeble members with thy life-virtues, and plant into my afflicted body thy healthy life, that I may cling as a member to thee, the Head, and draw from thee the powers of the world to come. Glorify thyself in me and in all fellow-sufferers to the glory of thy holy name. AMEN.

[NOTE.—Confession as before. See page 45.]

PRAYER FOR THE SICK BEFORE COMMUNION.

Blessed Father in heaven, with earnest thanksgiving and inward joy I greet the day and hour when so kind a ray of thy light of grace shines into my sick-room, and thy table of grace is to be spread before me. O how my soul longs for the medicine of immortality! As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I see his face? He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father. Therefore I lift up mine eyes unto thee, blessed Saviour, and look upon thy cross, on which thou didst atone for my guilt, and acquire for me free access to thy throne of grace.

With faith in thy precious work of atonement, I can with David exult: "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;" so that in the strength of thy sufferings and death they must fly before me, and I am able to overcome Satan, the world, and the flesh. Yea, thou deliverest me out of sorrow of soul, and anointest my head with the oil of joy, the Holy Ghost, and grantest me a full participation in all the rich gifts of thy house. Surely goodness and mercy should follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house and communion of the Lord forever. Blessed be thy name for such unspeakable grace! O Lord, fulfil in me the whole purpose of thy love which thou from eternity has determined in regard to me. It is true I am not worthy that thou should'st come under my roof. But look not upon my unworthiness, but upon my great need. Thou hast promised, that the needy shall eat and be filled, and the hungry thou fillest with good things. This hunger thou hast caused in me, and wilt continue to create it, that my soul may remain open like an empty vessel, into which thou wilt pour the riches of thy grace. I am poor, make me to be rich. I am weak; make me strong. I am unclean; cleanse me. I am full of the disease and leprosy of sin; wash me in thy blood, and heal me of all the ailments of my corrupt nature. Thou canst do whatever thou wilt. Thou renewest the face of the earth; renew me also. Thou didst heal the sick who had lain thirty-eight years helpless in all his members upon a couch of pain. Do thou also heal me, thou

Physician of body and soul, and cause thy precious flesh and blood to become a salutary medicine for my inner and outer man. O Lord, I wait for thy salvation! Visit me as the Rising from on high. Unite thyself in a perpetual union with my poor soul through the Holy Supper, and give me new life in thee, that I may consecrate all the powers of body and soul to thee, and that my will may be entirely absorbed by thine, which alone is good. What thou doest is well done. If it be thy will that I lie upon this sick-bed, I will do it. If it be thy will that I should suffer want, I will do it. If thou wilt that my affliction should prove fatal, I am content. Wilt thou that I should be sorrowful, I accept it. If thou give me death, I am ready. Thy will, O God, be done. Help me to attain such a quiet and patient and submissive mind, through the use of thy Holy Supper. Let me so become one with thee, that I shall not think that *I* live, but that *thou* livest in me, and I shall live in thee forever. Come now, O Lord, and lay thy high priestly hand upon my head, and say: *Peace be unto thee.* AMEN.

THE END.

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